

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended): A method of producing maraging steel containing from not less than 0.3 mass% to not more than 2.0 mass% of Ti and less than 15ppm of Mg, which comprises:

producing a consumable electrode made of the steel for vacuum arc remelting, by casting a molten steel which has been melted under vacuum, the consumable electrode containing not less than 5ppm of Mg, and non-metallic inclusions comprising nitrides having a nucleus of MgO;  
and

~~subsequently subjecting the consumable electrode to vacuum remelting in order to reduce the Mg content in the steel, wherein the consumable electrode comprises not less than 5ppm of Mg, the maraging steel after vacuum remelting contains nitride type non-metallic inclusions having a maximum length of not more than 15  $\mu\text{m}$  and oxide type non-metallic inclusions having a maximum length of not more than 20  $\mu\text{m}$ , whereby the MgO type non-metallic inclusions and the nucleus of MgO in the nitrides are decomposed so that the Mg content in a product of the vacuum arc remelting is reduced from the Mg content in the consumable electrode due to vaporization.~~

2. (currently amended): A method of producing maraging steel according to claim 1, wherein ~~the consumable electrode is the molten steel for casting has been~~ produced by a vacuum induction melting process.

Claim 3. (canceled).

4. (currently amended): A method of producing maraging steel according to claim 31, wherein a maraging steel product obtained by the vacuum arc remelting is subjected to plastic working to produce a thin strip having a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm.

5. (previously presented): Maraging steel comprising, by mass, at least, from not less than 0.3% to not more than 2.0% Ti, from more than zero to less than 15ppm of Mg, less than 10ppm oxygen and less than 15ppm nitrogen, wherein

the maraging steel contains nitride inclusions having a size of not more than 15  $\mu\text{m}$  in maximum length and oxide inclusions having a size of not more than 20  $\mu\text{m}$  in maximum length, and wherein

the oxide inclusions comprise spinel form inclusions and alumina inclusions in which a content of the spinel form inclusions having a size of not less than 10  $\mu\text{m}$  in length divided by a total content of the spinel form inclusions having a size of not less than 10  $\mu\text{m}$  in length plus the alumina inclusions having a size of not less than 10  $\mu\text{m}$  in length is more than 0.33.

6. (currently amended): Maraging steel according to claim 5, consisting essentially of, by mass not more than 0.01% C (carbon), 8.0 to 22.0% Ni, 5.0 to 20.0% Co, 2.0 to 9.0% Mo, from not less than 0.3% to not more than 2.0% Ti, not more than 1.7% Al, from more than zero

to less than 10 ppm Mg, less than 10ppm oxygen, less than 15ppm nitrogen, and the balance of Fe and incidental impurities.

7. (original): A thin strip which is made from maraging steel as defined in claim 5, and which has a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm.

8. (original): A thin strip which is made from maraging steel as defined in claim 6, and which has a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm.

9. (currently amended): The method according to claim 32, wherein the maraging steel after the vacuum arc remelting contains nitride type non-metallic inclusions having a maximum length of not more than 15  $\mu$ m and oxide type non-metallic inclusions having a maximum length of not more than 20  $\mu$ m.

10. (currently amended): The method according to claim 9, wherein a thin strip having a thickness of not more than 0.5mm is produced by plastic working the maraging steel after the vacuum arc remelting.

11. (currently amended): The method according to claim 4, wherein the thin strip having a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm is a component of continuously variable transmissions.

12. (currently amended): The method according to claim 10, wherein the thin strip having a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm is a component of continuously variable transmissions.

13. (currently amended): A component of continuously variable transmissions, which is made of the thin strip having a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm as defined in claim 7.

14. (currently amended): A component of continuously variable transmissions, which is made of the thin strip having a thickness of not more than 0.5 mm as defined in claim 8.

Claim 15. (canceled).

Claim 16. (canceled).